

## PATHWAY TO DISASTER – Akarana hand of the day 28 November 2018



Maybe you know many such ways to get a bad score at the bridge table? One is certainly making a weak hand as declarer and the strong hand as dummy. It gives free licence to imaginative defenders to underlead aces to give declarers impossible guesses at trick 1 when KJx of the suit appears in dummy. (the guess is less hard when dummy produces a singleton king of the suit!)

You should get the strong hand as declarer if at all possible. That's one reason why, unless you play transfer responses to a 1♣ opening bid, opening 1 of a minor with a hand which you should be opening at the 2 level because it is so strong is a recipe for disaster.

At least one South opened the following hand 1♣ when there is a very descriptive opening which will usually make the hand declarer:

♠ A32      ♥ A85      ♦ K3      ♣ AKQ65

What happened to 2NT or perhaps a Multi 2♦? The sequence proceeded at a very rapid pace:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
2♥	2♠	4♥	

South's wisest action might well have been to blast 6♠. However, science took over and South, perhaps naively, hoped for a constructive Key Card auction:

West	North	East	South
			4NT
5♦	Pass	5♥	?

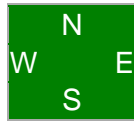
It was not clear whether South knew whether North's pass showed the one key-card they held but South had two realistic winning options and one losing one. South bailed out with 5♠ which was not a bad idea though North raised to 6♠...and unfortunately, we will never know whether South would have converted to 6NT as the complete auction is shown below the hand:

**Board 2**

East Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ 8 6 5  
♥ K J 9 4 3 2  
♦ A Q  
♣ 9 4

♠ K Q J 9 7 4  
♥ —  
♦ J 8 6 5 4  
♣ J 3



♠ A 3 2  
♥ A 8 5  
♦ K 3  
♣ A K Q 6 5

♠ 10  
♥ Q 10 7 6  
♦ 10 9 7 2  
♣ 10 8 7 2

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 ♣
2 ♥	2 ♠	4 ♥	4 NT
5 ♦	Pass	5 ♥	5 ♠
Pass	6 ♠	7 ♥	Dbl
All pass			

Would South have bid 6NT? Would East have led a diamond to 6♠ had they not? We will never know. What is almost certain is that if South had opened at the 2 level, South would have finished as declarer to 6♠ or 6NT and that East-West would probably have passed throughout. 7♥x is a good sacrifice (best defence is club to South followed by ♥A and another heart...-1100) if the opposition bid 6NT or East cannot find the diamond lead to 6♠ or if West is on lead to that contract. South got lucky this time.

Of course, opening a strong hand at the 2 level is not a certainty that the strong hand will be declarer. I could not bring myself to open the following at the 1 level:

♠ 4	22 high and 10 honour cards (10's are honours when you want them to be!). Since my hand was balanced (in 3 suits!), I was
♥ AKQT	able to open with a Multi 2♦ intending to show 22-23
♦ AJT8	balanced. However, the opposition were not sworn to silence:
♣ AKJ3	

West	North	East	South
2♦	2♠	3♥	Pass
?			

Undoubtedly, partner had guessed I was likely to hold a weak 2 in hearts and was just competing. "Competing" meant they held some high cards. Thus, there was only one action to take as describing how good my hand had become would be impossible... now worth 25 hcp rather than 22. Thus, I bid an immediate 6♥.

**The bad news.** The strong hand was about to be dummy.

**The better news.** South probably had no ace to under-lead.

**The excellent news.** There had been no double, a double from which East-West could not escape. This time, South's spade lead could not trouble the declarer.

		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
<u><b>Board 22</b></u>	♠ A Q J 10 6 2			Pass	Pass
East Deals	♥ J 5 4	2♦	2♠	3♥	Pass
E-W Vul	♦ —	6♥	All pass		
	♣ Q 7 4 2				
♠ 4				♠ K 8 5 3	
♥ A K Q 10	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;">           N W     E S         </div>			♥ 9 8 7 3	
♦ A J 10 8				♦ K Q 4	
♣ A K J 3				♣ 8 6	
	♠ 9 7				
	♥ 6 2				
	♦ 9 7 6 5 3 2				
	♣ 10 9 5				

This board is a perfect example of a Lightner double. North should have doubled 6♥, Lightner style, asking for an unusual lead. South should have little difficulty in working out which suit their partner wants led. If East-West stay in hearts, they will lose the first two tricks. If East retreats to 6NT, there are only 11 tricks available. "Death" may be slower but there is no squeeze for the 12<sup>th</sup> trick.

You can argue that either North or South could have a void diamond though it is more likely to be with the player who has length in another suit.

Making West declarer is much more likely for the success of the contract.

Rather like a James Bond movie, there were clues there or available to be there to say that "Diamonds are forever". In each, it was much better for the strong hand to be declarer. Always lead one, a diamond, that is! Had diamonds been led to 6♠ and 6♥, there would be a little more thought given to making the strong hand declarer.

*Richard Solomon*